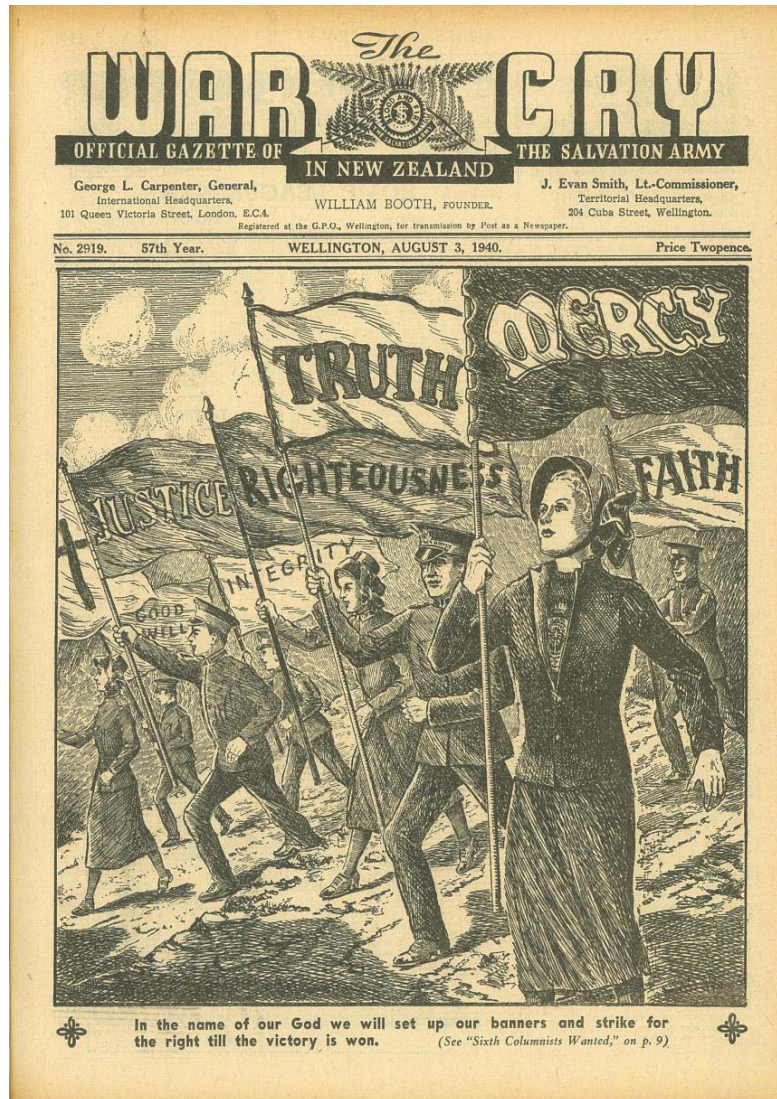


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“LASSES, LIVE UP TO YOUR PRIVILEGES, AND STAND UP FOR YOUR RIGHTS!”¹

Gender Equality in The Salvation Army in New Zealand, 1883-1960



A thesis submitted to Massey University in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in History

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¹ Thesis title taken from an article by “S.U.B.” entitled “Women’s Rights” in *The War Cry*, December 26, 1891, 7. Cover illustration is the front cover of *The War Cry* dated August 3, 1940.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis evaluates The Salvation Army's claim that women and men had equal status in the organisation, in the light of research from elsewhere in the world that women did not have genuinely equal opportunities in the organisation. It examines the gender history of The Salvation Army in New Zealand from the time of its arrival in Dunedin in 1883 until 1960 with its primary aim being to determine the nature and extent of gender equality in the organisation during this period. In order to do this, it examines the roles, opportunities and responsibilities offered both to male and female officers; discusses how women and men were portrayed in official publications, primarily the New Zealand edition of *The War Cry*; and looks for both obvious and subtle signs of discrimination against women officers. It also attempts to uncover traces of the voices and stories of the women who served The Salvation Army in New Zealand.

Throughout the period under investigation women officers made up a very high proportion of Salvation Army officers in New Zealand. Prior to World War One, particularly in the period from 1883 to 1900, women officers were able to participate in most aspects of the work of The Salvation Army in New Zealand, with positions appearing to be allocated on merit and availability rather than on gender. Over time however and particularly in the years from 1930 to 1960, women officers were increasingly relegated to positions in smaller corps and into roles involving the care of women and children. Married women officers were often treated as subordinate to their husbands and offered limited opportunities within the organisation. The Salvation Army increasingly conformed to, rather than challenged, the gender mores of other religious denominations and of New Zealand society more generally. Therefore, I conclude, that on balance, although there were occasionally some exceptional women, and at some points, particularly during the years prior to World War One, a degree of equality, that The Salvation Army in New Zealand largely failed to offer equality of opportunity, or equal roles, responsibilities and status to its women officers.

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I would especially like to thank my family-Paul, Glenys, Rebecca, Lizzie and Jess for their support and encouragement during the course of this project. Their proof reading skills have also been much appreciated.

I would like to conclude by acknowledging the life of one of the woman officers mentioned in this thesis, Anne Forsyth. In the late 1920s my father and his siblings went to live at The Salvation Army's Cecilia Whatman Children's Home in Masterton. In the 1990s my father was asked to provide some reminiscences which were to be used in a book about growing up as an orphan in New Zealand. Recently I found the notes he made at this time which he entitled "The Gratitude of an Orphan." He wrote, "I believe now because of their calling to dedicated service most of our officers put their heart into seeing that the best was provided, in the care taken and methods used for our welfare. This service and understanding of us was to make a deep impression on my mind." He wrote specifically about Anne Forsyth who was the Matron during his time at the orphanage, noting "a friendship was established and remained between us to the end of her days." Anne Forsyth maintained regular contact with my father from 1930 until she died aged 94 in 1986.

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